

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DOTE-00 NSF-01 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-08
NRC-05 FAA-00 /067 W
-----114726 302034Z /75
R 301058Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3785

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DEPT PASS DOT FOR ALLEN TPI-42

DEPT PASS TO NSF FOR AUFENKAMP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRN, TGEN, TECH, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-USSR TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT: RAILWAYS -
VISIT OF US DELEGATION (05.03)

1. A US RAILWAY DELEGATION VISITED THE USSR MAY 28
JUNE 10 UNDER SUBJECT AGREEMENT OBSERVING SOVIET
LOCOMOTIVE PRODUCTION AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES IN
ROSTOV, NOVOROSLYSK, KIEV, KHARKOV AND KIEV. IN
MSOCOW, USDEL HEARD PRESENTATIONS ON TOPICS RELATED TO
DIESEL AND ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE CONSTRUCTION AND MAIN-
TENANCE AND ALSO VISITED THE SHCHERBINKA TEST RING WHERE
THEY HAD ACCESS TO THE TEP-70 LOCOMOTIVE, WHICH THE
SOVIETS CLAIM IS THEIR MOST ADVANCED LOCOMOTIVE
TECHNOLOGY.

2. USDEL COMMENTED THAT VISIT WAS GENERALLY USEFUL,
NOTING THEIR CONTACTS WITH SOVIET RAILROADMEN WERE OF
PARTICULAR INTEREST AND OF BENEFIT. USDEL EXPRESSED,
HOWEVER, DISAPPOINTMENT WITH SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THEIR
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VISIT;

-- SOVIETS DID NOT PROVIDE ACCESS TO THEIR LATEST
6000 HP LOCOMOTIVE;
-- SOVIETS DID NOT ARRANGE A VISIT TO LOCOMOTIVE CON-
STRUCTION FACILITY IN VOROSHILOVGRAD WHERE
REPORTEDLY MOST MODERN SOVIET LOCOMOTIVES ARE BEING

BUILT; AND

-- VISITS WERE GENERALLY SUPERFICIAL NOT PERMITTING SUSTAINED EXPOSURE TO BOTH SOVIET TECHNICAL SPECIALIS AND TECHNOLOGY. THOUGH USDEL PRAISED TRADITIONAL SOVIET HOSPITALITY, THEY INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD HA PREFERRED VISIT TO HAVE CONCENTRATED MORE ON SUBSTAN- TIVE ISSUES.

3. USDEL GENERALLY WAS IMPRESSED BY WHAT THEY SAW OF SOVIET RAIL OPERATIONS IN PARTICULAR, SOVIET LOCOMOTIVE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES. USDEL OBSERVED THAT SOVIET LOCOMOTIVE CONSTRUCTION FACTORIES RANGED FROM THE VERY MODERN TO PRIMITIVE, SOMETIME JUXTAPOSED SIDE BY SIDE. GREATEST SOVIET WEAKENESSES WERE IN THE GENERAL AREA OF WELDING AND WELD TESTING. (WE NOTE THAT US NUCLEAR REACTOR CONSTRUCTION SPECIALISTS HAVE RECENTLY NOTED SIMILAR TECHNICAL WEAKENESSES). ON THE OTHER HAND, USDEL WAS IMPRESSED WITH SOME SOVIET MACHINERY PROCESSES AND THE APPLICATION OF ELECTROSLAG REMELT TECHNOLOGY. SOVIET ENGINEERS COMPLAINED PRIVATELY OF SEVERE PARTS SHORTAGES, ESPECIALLY OF GEARS, LEVERS, PIIS AND BOLTS USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOCOMOTIVES. SOVIETS HAVE RESPONDED TO THIS PROBLEM, USDEL REPORTED, BY SETTING UP WITHIN CONSTRUCTION FACILITIES THEIR OWN SMALL-SCALE PARTS PRODUCTION FACILITIES, THEREBY ENSURING THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSEMBLY AND REPAIR FACILITIES CONTINUE TO MEET THE DEMANDS ON THEM.

4. SOVIETS REPORTEDLY TOLD USDEL THAT RAIL NETWORK IS PRESENTLY WORKING AT FULL CAPACITY AND THAT THE ONLY WAY MINRAIL ENVISAGES MOVING MORE FREIGHT IS BY INCREASING THE LOAD CAPACITYOF FREIGHT CARS. THE SOVIETS ARE INTRODUCING HEAVIER WAGON TRUCS AND ARE VERY INTERESTED IN US EXPERIENCE WITH HEAVY LOAD-BEARING AXLES. THE USE OF HIGHER CAPACITY FREIGHT CARS IS CAUSING PROBLEMS WITH TRACK MAINTENANCE. SOVIETS NOTED THAT HIGH DENSITY LINES IN THE NORTH CAUCAUSUS, FOR EXAMPLE, REQUIRE NEW TRACK AND TIES EVERY THREE YEARS DESPITE THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONCRETE TIES AND THE MOST MODERN STEEL-ALLOY RAIL TECHNOLOGY. ACCORDING TO USDEL, SOVIETS ARE DISCOVERING THAT CONCRETE TIES DO NOT SUSTAIN HEAVY LOADS AND HIGH FREQUENCY TRAFFIC WELL OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND SOVIETS CONSEQUENTLY ARE REINTRODUCING WOOD TIES ON HIGH DENSITY ROUTES.

5. COMMENT. VISIT CONFIRMED GENERAL VIEW THAT US/USSR COOPERATION ON RAIL TRANSPORT IS USEFUL TO BOTH

COUNTRIES; HOWEVER, FURTHER EFFORT IS NEEDED ON BOTH
SDIES TO DEFINE A WORK PROGRAM GOING BEYOND ANNUAL
ORIENTATION VISITS AND DOCUMENT EXCHANGES. USDEL
MEMBER HARRIS OF ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS
INDICATES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT JOINT MODELLING PROJECT
ON OPTIONAL UTILIZATION OF RAIL CARS ON A NATION-WIDE
BASIS COULD BE OF HIGH MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTEREST.
ON ADVICE OF SCICOUNS, HARRIS SAID HE WOULD CONSULT
WITH DON AUFENKAMP AT NSF ON POSSIBLE TIE-IN OF SUCH
ACTIVITY TO THE COMPUTER APPLICATIONS TO MANAGEMENT
PROJECT UNDER THE S&T AGREEMENT (01.01). WE ARE
DISAPPOINTED THAT SOVIETS DID NOT PERMIT ACCESS TO THE
6000 HP LOCOMOTIVE IN THE LOCOMOTIVE CONSTRUCTION
FACILITY AT VOROSHILOVGRAD, DESPITE CLEARLY
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EXPRESSED US INTEREST. WE RECOMMEND THAT DOT/FAA
TAKE THIS INTO CONSIDERATION IN DECIDING LEVEL OF
ACCESS TO BE GRANTED SOVDEL ON RETURN VISIT
TO US. END COMMENT.TOON

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Message Attributes

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